critical digest

139 East 47 St. NY 17 NY
EL 5-6894 T. M. Kraus

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Next Week

No Exit- Theatre East-211 E 60 8/14. Newhall & Weigert producers, Pat Newhall director. With Robert Mandan, Tani Seitz, Helen Seamon.

Picture of Dorian Gray-Bleecker Theatre, 145 Bleecker St 8/16. Presented by Kohlman, Milligan and Armetta.

Re-Openings

Middle of Night-ANTA 8/27. With Edward G. Robinson.

Inherit the Wind-National 9/14. With Paul Muni.

London Musical

Salad Days, 3 year old English musical, seemed too amateurish for American tastes, reports Watts, Post. Musical is proudly whimsical, music and cast is not distinguished.

Digests of Current Comments on Summer Shows

The Taming of the Shrew- Stratford, Conn, third and final Shakespeare production of season, was enjoyed by Times, Herald Tribune, Post and Journal American reviewers as a lively version of the Bard's comedy. Peper, World Telegram-Sun, panned it as a heavy handed, low comedy attempt. Norman Lloyd directed, and cast was headed by Nina Foch, Pernell RobertsFritz Weaver and Mike Kellin. Gelb, Times, noted that certain liberties had been taken with the staging, some of which worked and some of which didn't work. Production is on par with group's Measure for Measure, and better than group's King John--the three plays being given in repertory. Guest reviewers Bella and Sam Spewack, authors of Kiss Me Kate, filed pro notice in Herald Tribune. With or without music Spewacks' admitted script needs rigorous editing. Watts, Post, praised the inventive direction by Lloyd, and the teamwork of the company for bringing freshness and zest to script.

The Lark-presented with original NY cast starring Julie Harris-was cheered by Chapman, News, at its Central City, Colo, performance. Star gave a performance that was as fresh, as glowing with spirit as her NY opening night. The play remains a crafty combination of strength, imagination and no little beauty, critic repeated.

The Gimmick- a new comedy by Joseph Julian tried out at Westport, Conn, was tagged as not for Broadway by Doul, Variety. Trade reviewer feared joke was overextended, the dialogue ran down and comedy ended in a swamp of unlikely behavior... First Night-a new comedy by A P. Mollison tried out at Sea Cliff, LI, was okayed as moderately amusing summer fare by Dash, Women's Wear, but critic thought it would need much work for a NY try... Susan and the Stranger- a new play by Robert Nathan tried out at Mt Kisco, NY, also okayed as light-weight summer vehicle by Jess, Variety, though the situation and characters aren't particularly impressive.

Hits Revisited

Pajama Game with Neile Adams in the role originated by Carol Haney is the cutest dish to have the assignment, judges Hobe, Variety. Except for leads most of cast is showing signs of longrun. Inspite of this it remains an enjoyable show.

1957-58 NYC season should be an international one. Billy Rose, currently in Europe, completed an agreement in principle for a major exchange of American and Polish artists during 1957, on terms similar to a Soviet agreement made in Moscow the preceding week. The Russian agreement would bring 500 American performers to the Soviet in 1957 and 500 Soviet performers to U.S. during the year.

Plays

Hatful of Rain closes Sept 29... Build With One Hand moved back its opening date from Sept to Nov... Child of Fortune opens at Royale Nov 12... Bert Brecht's Good Woman of Setzuan will be presented on Broadway by Eric BentleyBrendan Behan's The Quare Fellow opens at Booth in mid-Nov... Joseph Kipness will present La Plume de Ma Tante with the original Paris cast playing in English.

Players

Jason Robards, Jr and Bradford Dillman signed for Long Day's Journey Into Night.. Walter Slezak to play title role in First Gentleman opening in Apr ...Cornelia Otis Skinner joined Major Barbara cast... Jack Warden to play title role in Very Special Baby... Richard Wilbur, a young American poet, will do lyrics for Candide musical... Shirley Jones and Jack Cassidy married between performances of Beggar's Opera at Cambridge, Mass.

Summer Playhouses

Roosevelt Theatre, Miami, managed by Sam Hirsch, has folded... Stratford, Conn, Shakespeare Festival trustees had to reject American Theatre Society offer to tour their productions.

Legal Dept

NYC Dept of Licenses hearing into activities of Sylvia Siegler, whose broker's license has been suspended revealed that a charity group had to use a broker (Siegler) to dispose of 109 My Fair Lady tickets. She also reversed a previous plea of quilty on 8 counts of overcharging and failing to comply with regulations. Broker did admit her records were incomplete. Hearings, which lasted 2 days this week, will resume next week.

Vaudeville

Judy Garland will return to the Palace for a limited reserved seat run starting Sept 20. She will take over the entire second half of the program, with the "AllStar Variety Show" taking the first part... Current Palace show features Pete Marshall and Tommy Farrell, Tanya, Eric Badicton, and Ross Myse and June Mann... "Kingdom of Sea" an underwater ballet will feature new Radio City Music Hall show. Also George Sawyer, albert Sturm and Elliott Reed.

Other Broadways

Gladys Cooper flew to London to replace ill Dame Edith Evans in The Chalk Garden... Anthony Quayle will star in club presentation in London of View from the Bridge, which censor banned... Lesley Sturm's Long Echo drew mixed notices in London press.

Theatre TV & Radio Notes

Ma r y Martin will star in NBC TV production of Born Yesterday Oct 28... Shirley Jones and Gordon Ma c Ra e star in CBS TV "Cole Porter Festival" Oct 6... NBC TV Hall of fame will present Man and Superman Nov 25 with Maurice Evans starred.

Theatre Book Notes

My Fair Lady published by Coward-McCann... "North Carolina Drama" by Richard Waiser published by Garrett & Massie.

OFF BROADWAY

Dolores Del Rio, currently touring barns in Anastasia , to make NY debut in Sea Gull at 4th St Oct 9...Robert Mandan, Tani Seitz and Helen Seamon featured in No Exit due Aug 14 at Theatre East, 211 E 60, Pat Newhall directs.

Bill Gunn, Rosetta La Noire and Helen Haynes signed for Take a Giant Step Sept 25 at Jan Hus... Iceman Cometh canceled Sun-Aug 12 show to allow Jason Robards, Jr. to appear on NBC TV Philco... World's My Oyster giving Friday midnight performances. Jacqueline Barnes replaced Dolores Harper in cast one night prior to opening.

The Happy Ant Hill will be presented in October at Carl Fischer Theatre, W 57, by Chelsea Productions... Arnato Players will move from 1607 Broadway to 2121 Broadway. Joseph Ornato will set-up a 200 seat off Broadway theatre at new address.

The World's My Oyster, new musical at Actors Playhouse, 100 Seventh Ave South, was panned by Beckley, Herald Tribune, Herridge, Post and "D. H. " Women's Wear, for failing to present capable cast of talented Negro artists with worthwhile material. Generally flaccid musical, too much on the trite level, summed up Herald Tribune reviewer. Pleasant but undistinguished little thing, noted Post drama editor. Trite story, lackluster lialog make for dull proceedings, agreed Women's Wear aisle-sitter. All agreed cast headed by Butterfly mcQueen, Ned Wright, Lorenzo Fuller deserved better. Lorenzo Fuller was also responsible for the lyrics and the book. Jed Duane was the director.

THEATRE BOOK COMMENTS

"Theatre in the East" by Faubion Bowers (Nelson & Sons) was recommended by Terry, Herald Tribune, and Paul Green, Times, as the best and most interesting work in its field. Book will delight students and followers of dance, drama and related forms of theatre, noted Terry, but he felt it should also prove thoroughly stimulating for the general reader.

"Blessed Are the Debonair" by Margaret Case Harriman (Rinehart) was mildly approved by Rodo, Variety, who thought current book by daughter of Hotel Algonquin manager Frank Case lacked the bite of some of her earlier works.

THEATRE RECORD COMMENTS

The Most Happy Fella discs (Columbia) was rated as one of the year's prize packages in either the one disc ($4. 98) or three disc ($14. 94) versions by Kupperberg, Herald Tribune. He did note that in full version some of songs were feeble and could have been easily left out, and that story line in lyrics became fuzzy at times.

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CRITICAL DIGEST, 139 E 47, EL 5-6894

GREEN

ROOM

DEPARTMENT

PHOTO EXHIBIT... Current Limelight Gallery, 91 Seventh Ave South, 6 PM -1 AM daily, exhibit of 70 theatrical photographs recommended by Deschin, Times. Pictures taken between 1860 and 1900 , on loan from George Eastman House of Photography, Rochester, will be on view through Sept 17. Photo editor was especially impressed with photos by Napoleon Sarony, the leading theatrical photographer of the period and a pioneer of the natural effect. Edwin Booth, Joseph Jefferson, Ellen Terry and Sarah Bernhardt pictures are featured.

COLUMN TIPS... Roberta Sherwood being considered for lead in Anna Christie musical hears Winchell... Jack Carter and Kay Medford had a fight on-stage at Mr. Wonderful, reports Walker... Jerry Lewis may star in a Broadway musical this season, whispers O Connor.

CATCH UP TIME... Reservations to most Broadway hits are now available aa short notice, Reminds Coleman, Mirror. But critic warned theatre fans not to delay because the return of the summer vacationers to NY will soon be underway. Then the ticket situation will be tough again.

CRITICAL THOUGHTS... Brendan Behan, Quare Fellow author, struck Watts, Post, on two fortunately brief encounters, as one of the most unpleasant men he had ever met. But he can put words together brillantly, critic added... McClain, Journal American, served notice that though he gave free advice to London show, To My Love, without seeing it, he has nothing, but nothing, to do with its coming NY production.

FRESH MUSICALS... News of Rodgers and Hammerstein's plans for making a musical of Life with Father wasn't cheered by Watt, News, who hopes that the composers will later on create something wholly new and delightful for the lyric theatre instead of being frightened off by the poor showing made by their only two entirely original efforts--Allegro and Me and Juliet. How refreshing it is to enter a theatre with no real knowledge of what lies before you, ponders music editor.

DRAMA MAIL BOX... AFWASG--an informal group of Hollywood film stars banded together as the "Actors Fed Up with Actors Studio Graduates" filed an open letter with Hyams, Herald Tribune, listing their gripes. Playing scenes for themselves, mumbling, taking themselves too seriously were a few peeves listed... "Who Cares" instead of "Who's Who" would be a more apt description of most theatre program biographies which list past TV shows of cast, pans a "C. D." subscriber.

INTERVIEW HI-LITES... Smart persistence that never flagged from the goal made up for standard good looks, pull and dramatic school training in the case of Jean Stapleton, Damn Yankee, concludes Herridge, Post. That spells success after 16 years. For 5 years she worked full time as secretary at British Ministry of War Transport. Actress pointed out importance of trying out for every available opening, paid or unpaid.

" PROS & CONS BY TMK "

First Night, a new comedy by A. P. Mollison on the rights of a 12th century Lord toward the peasant brides of his state on their wedding nights, was given an amusing, well cast and well directed production at Sea Cliff, NY, Summer Theatre.

Though the comedy would need much rewriting and development before a Broadway try, it provided an entertaining, better than average evening of summer theatre fare.

Cast of old and young pros followed the nimble direction of Louis Macmillan who made the most out of the comic situations. Several of the fight scenes were as funny as any seen on or off Broadway in recent seasons.

Unlike many Broadway sex comedies, First Night is not a one-joke affair. The characters developed lead to as much humor as the basic idea of the script.

Edith King and Harry Bannister are the old pros who act as the backbone for the comedy. Able comedy performances are also turned in by new-comers Peter Brandon, Jeff Harris and Vincent Gardinia. The two younger female members of the cast were not up to the comedy pace set and tended to often slow down the proceedings.

The play, though three acts, is on the short side and would need additional characters and scenes if presented on Broadway.

Sea Cliff Summer Theatre, managed by Tom Radcliffe, is a handsome, comfortable strawhatter just 30 miles from New York City.

* * *

The World's My Oyster, a new musical presented at Actors Playhouse, is a supreme waste of top talent.

No one can question the musical talents of Ned Wright, Meses Lamarr, Lorenzo Fuller, all of whom just returned from an overseas tour in Porgy and Bess. No one can question the comic talents of Butterfly McQueen. No one will argue that the other members of the all Negro cast are talented, ambitious performers.

But material , music, lyrics and book were of third rate quality and nothing could be done to make it look or sound good. The direction was on a par with the rest of the elements involved.

* * *

1956-57 Broadway season promises to be one of the most hectic in years. The booking jam will insure that only the instant money makers among the plays and musicals will last for any length of time. With many NY legit theatres already booked for 2 or 3 shows during the season the ambitious theatre fan will have to keep moving to see many of the worthwhile shows. If he waits too long, the show he wanted to see will be gone to make room for the next, and the manager hopes, and more profitable booking. The solution, of course, is more theatres, and some-day NY may get them. But until then the theatre fan will need fast legs and a pocketful of cash to see all the plays he would like to see.

* * *

Old Vic To America

Moving the Old Vic company from theatre to theatre during its American tour will be one of the major duties of John Murphy, the Old Vic stage director for the tour, "Stage " the English theatre trade journal learned.

In addition to sets and costumes, the company also will carry its own false proscenium and border needed to create the apron conditions that are an essential a part of all Old Vic productions.

The company, consisting in the main of last season's Old Vic players , will open their season with a pre-American short tour playing Bristol, Liverpool and Manchester prior to their Sept 9 flight to Montreal. At Manchester every item of equipment will be checked by customs officials.

The group opens its American season of a minimum of 20 weeks in Montreal Sept 17. They will play a week in Montreal, three weeks in Toronto, two days each at the University theatres of Bloomington and Lafayette, Indiana, and then open Oct 23, probably at the Winter Garden, in New York. The NY season is scheduled to end Jan 19.

Macbeth, Romeo and Juliet, Richard II and Troilus and Cressida are the plays to be presented. Each will have to be restaged for each theatre by Mr. Murphy. The Troillus and Cressida especially will have to be redirected for the London production uses steps leading up from the stage-level.

While this will be his first chore as a stage-director, Murphy toured last season as stage manager of the Australian Old Vic tour, and prior to that he was stage manager for John Gielgud's South African production of Richard II.

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SUMMER

THEATRE

TRYOUTS

Dead on Nine-mystery play by Jack Popplewell with Barbara Britton, Murray Matheson presented by Ron Rawson and Charles Mooney . Aug 6- at Dennis, Mass, and Aug 13 at East Hampton, NY.

The Golden Egg- a new comedy by Philip King and Gioia Cook with Donald Cook presented by Alexander Ince and Joel Schenker. At Oquinquit, Maine, Aug 6, and Coonamessett, Mass, Aug 13.

Spa- adapted by Edward Chodorov from Molnar's Olympia with Gloria Vanderbilt, Turhan Bey and Violet Heming. Presented Aug 6 at Hyde Park, NY

Sudden Spring- Elihu Winer's adaption of Halstead Welles play with Celeste Holm. Presented Aug 6 at Coonamesset, Mass.

"OFF BROADWAY"

AQUASHOW Flushing	CI 5-6641	6 pro votes for Murphy 12th edition watershow
CALL OF DUTY Provincetown	131 MacDoug GR 7-8984	FINAL WEEK 3 Con- Times, Post, Variety
ICEMAN COMETH Circle $3.60	5 Sher Sq OR 5-9437	6 Pros- Times, Trib, Mirror, J. Am, WT & S, Post
MAN DESTINY Downtown$3.60	85 E 4 GR 3-4412	2 Pro- Times, Post 2 Con- Variety, Womens Wear
3 PENNY OPER De Lys $3.60	121 Chris WA 4-8782	3 Pros- Times, Trib, Post
SHOW BOAT Jones Beach		7 Pros for Guy Lombardo production
TAM NG SHREW East River Amp		Thur & Fri to Sept
UNCLE VANYA 4th St	83 E 4 OR 4-5710	7 Pro for revival. A.Ryder replaced F. Tone
WORLD MY OYS. Actors $3.60	100 7th S. OR 5-1036	3 Cons- Tribune, Post, Womens Wear

"C.D. VIEWS OF CURRENT SHOWS"

Pros: Damn Yankee, Diary Anne Frank, Fallen Angels, Inherit Wind
Uncle Vanya, Iceman Cometh

Cons: Middle Night, Fanny

" TV THEATRE SHOWS "

10/6- CBS-TV- Cole Porter Festival- Ford
10/28-NBC TV- Born Yesterday- Mary Martin on Evans show
11/25- NBC TV Man and Superman- Evans.

" THEATRE CALENDER "

Hotel Excelsior-Provincetown 8/7
No Exit-Theatre East 211 E 60 8/14
Picture Dor. Gray Bleecker-145 Blk 8/16

Saint Joan- Phoenix 9/4
Arms & Man- Downtown 9/?
Pictures at Exhib- Playhouse 9/16
Lower Depths- Contemp- 9/16

Judy Garland Show- Palace 9/20
Take Giant Step-Jan Hus 9/25
Loud Red Patrick-Ambassador 10/2
6 Finger in 5 Finger Glov-Long. 10/3
Harbor Lights- Playhouse 10/4
Mr. Candido-G. Mews 10/8
Sea Gull- 4th St- 10/9

Feathured Fauna-Golden 10/10
Reluctant Debutante-Miller 10/10
Diasy Miller- Equity Lib 10/10
Too Late Phalarope-Belasco 10/11

Happy Ant-Hill- Fisher Hall 10/?
Apple Cart- Plymouth 10/18
L'il Abner- St James 10/22
Old Vic- W. Garden 10/23

Separate Tables- Music Box 10/25
Sleeping Prince- Coronet 10/28
Major Barbara-Beck 10/30
Auntie Mame-BVroadhurst 10/31

Long Day's Journey-Hayes 11/1?
City Center- 11/7
Best House in Naples- 11/8
Build With One Hand -11/?
Quare Fellow- Booth 11/?

Child of Fortune-Royale 11/12
Very Special Baby-Belasco 11/14
Happiest Millionaire- 11/17
Girls of Summer-Longacre 11/19
Candide- Beck 11/22
Bells are Ringing-Shubert 11/29

Happy Hunting- Majestic 12/6
Hole in Head- Morosco 12/12

Visit to Small Planet-Booth 1/9/57
Best of Steinbeck-Playhouse 2/1/57
13 Daughters- W. Garden 2/18/57
First Gentlemen/4/?/57

"SUMMER PACKAGE RATINGS "

BEASOP'S FABLES(Lillie)	1 Pro- Post(Andover) 1 Con- Variety (Andover
CHALK GARDEN (Gishs)	2 Pro-Variety & Wor -Tel_-Sun(Westport)
Sticks & Stones(Gingold)	1 Pro- Post- East Hampton 2 Con- WT & S & Variety (East Hampton
WELCOME DARLINGS (Bankhead)	3 Pro for Bankhead but against material Post, WT &S, Var iety (Westport)
WHATS THE RUSH (Lewis)	1 Pro- Variety - Hinsdale, Ill)

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Aug 8, 1956 PLAYGOERS GUIDE chart of CRITICAL DIGEST, 139 E 47, NYC EL 5-6894
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This weekly chart of CRITICAL DIGEST, the weekly NYC theatre newsletter, presents up-to-minute data on current business and critical reception of all current Broadway and Off-Broadway shows. Subscribers to CRITICAL DIGEST may write or phone for any other specific data or late reviews.

"C"- Critics- figures refer to percentage of PRO votes filed by NYC daily drama critics. PRO means show was recommended for an entertaining and/or stimulating evening, not if critic thought it would be a hit.

"B"- Business -figures refer to percentage of seats sold last week and in preceding weeks. %%Percentage figures refer to last week's business. "CAP" figures refer to Variety's estimates of gross for last week and previous week. All figures listed in thousands. Thus, "Cap $27--$24 $21" means Capacity of house is $27, business last week was $24,000, the previous week $21,000, etc.

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CAT HOT TIN ROOF Morosco $6.90	217 W 45 CI 6-6230	60% C-Chapman, News, filed sole con vote 55% B- Cap$31--$19-$21 $21 $23 $20 $28 $27
DAMN YANKEE 46th St $8.05	226 W 46 CI 6-4271	100% C- Unanimous raves for musical 90% B- Cap $50--$43 $48 $47 $50 $46 $50 $50
DIARY A. FRANK Cort $5.75	138 W 48 CI 5-4289	100% C- Uananimous raves for Pulitzer winner 95% B- Cap $28-- $28 $28 $25 $28 $27 $25 $28
FALLEN ANGELS Playhouse $4.60	137 W 48 CI 5-6060	0% for Play, 100% Walker-Phillips replaced her 55% B- Cap $28--$15 $14 $13 $13 $13 $13 $13
FANNY Majestic $.7.50	245 W 44 CI 6-0730	50% C-Con votes by H. Trib, Mir, Post, J. Am 45% B- Cap $62--$28 $28 $28 $24 $19 $25 $28
HATFUL RAIN Lyceum $5.75	149 W 45 LU 2-3897	70% C- 3 Con votes by Mirror, Post, J. Am 40% B- Cap $23--$8 $8 $10 $10 $14 $14 $18
INHERIT WIND National $5.75	208 W 41 PE 6-8226	90% C- Funke, sole con vote RE OPENS SEPT 14 **********
MATCHMAKER Royale $5.75	250 W 45 CI 5-5760	90% C- Watts, Post, sole con vote 50% B- Cap $31--$14 $13 $13 $14 %17 $21
MIDDLE NIGHT ANTA $5.75	250 W 52 CI 6-8870	20% C-2 Pro Play -Mir, J. Am -100% C for Robinsn RE OPENS aAUG 24**********
MR WONDERFUL Broadway $7.50	1681 Bway CI 7-2887	10% C-Chapman, News, Sole Pro- 100% C for Davis 65% B- Cap $71--$42 $45 $46 $41 $48 $54 $58
MOST HAPPY FELLA Imperial $7.50	246 W 45 CO 5-2412	100% Unanimous raves for musical & cast 98% B-Cap $58--$56- $58 $58 $58 $58
MY FAIR LADY Hellinger $7.50	1655 Bway PL 7-7064	100% Raves for musical of GBS classic 100% B- Cap $64--$64 $64 $64 $64 $64 $64
NO TIME SGTS Alvin $5.75	250 W 52 CI 5-5226	100% C- Unanimous raves for soldier comedy 100% B- Cap $38--$$38 $38 $38 $38 $38
NEW FACES Barrymore $7.50	247 W 47 CI 6-0390	60% C-3 Pros-News, Mirror, J. Am 60% B- Cap $38--$23 $27 $30 $36 $22 $37
PAJAMA GAME St James $6.90	240 W 44 LA 4-4664	100% Unanimous raves for musical 55% B- Cap $52- $27 $30 $29 $28 $32 $38 $41
WILL SUCCESS Shubert $5.75	245 SW 44 CI 6-5090	20% C- 2 Pros- J. Am, News 30% B- Cap $41-- $12 $14 $15-moved from Belasc.

"RATINGS OF NYC CRITICS"

1955-56 season ratings of NYC drama critics on CURRENT Broadway shows by Critical Digest. "%%" Figures are percentage of pro votes in comparison to number of current shows reviewed. Variety figures of 1955-56 and 1954-55 seasons are percentage figures of favorable reviews written for entire season.

	"C. D. %%"	Pros	Cons	Variety '55-'56	'54-'55
Atkinson, Times	60%	10	6	.490	.607
Kerr, Herald Tribune	55%	9	7	.394	.354
Chapman, News	80%	13	3	.527	.580
Coleman, Mirror	65%	11	5	.454	.566
Watts, Post	50%	8	8	.541	.426
Hawkins, W-Tel-Sun	65%	11	5	.396	.548
McClain, J. Amer	80%	12	4	.535	532